

Statistics Weekly

Thursday, 15 September 1994

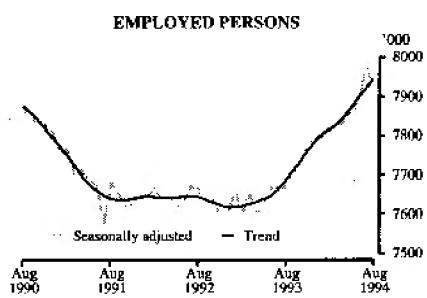
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Statistics

Employment maintains upward trend through August

In August 1994, the provisional trend estimate of employment rose to 7,941,900, the highest level recorded by the survey and 0.6 per cent higher than the June 1990 peak of 7,894,100. Trend estimates of persons employed full time have been increasing since October 1992 and stood at 6,030,400 in August 1994. The trend in unemployment decreased for the eleventh successive month to 834,900, the lowest level since July 1991. The trend estimate of the unemployment rate fell to 9.5 per cent in August 1994, 1.6 percentage points lower than the October to December 1992 peak of 11.1 per cent. The trend estimate of the participation rate remained steady at 62.9 per cent.



Employment

The seasonally adjusted estimate of employed persons for August 1994 was 7,934,200, a decrease of 38,000 since July 1994. Full-time employment fell slightly to 6,027,200. Part-time employment fell by 30,500 to 1,907,000, due to a fall of 31,500 in the number of females employed part time.

Unemployment

In August 1994, the seasonally adjusted estimate of unemployed persons was relatively steady at 831,500. Male unemployment rose slightly to 485,000. Female unemployment fell by 7,800 to 346,500 due to a fall of 9,000 females seeking part-time work.

LABOUR FORCE SURVEY ESTIMATES Seasonally adjusted

	<i>Employed</i>			Unem-ployed — '000 —	Unem-ployment rate	Partici-pation rate — per cent —		
	Full-time workers	Part-time workers	Total					
	— '000 —							
1994								
March	5 951.4	1 875.3	7 826.8	902.7	10.3	62.9		
April	5 960.2	1 872.3	7 832.5	875.1	10.1	62.6		
May	5 981.7	1 881.3	7 863.0	851.8	9.8	62.6		
June	6 012.1	1 869.9	7 882.0	877.7	10.0	62.9		
July	6 034.7	1 937.5	7 972.2	833.9	9.5	63.2		
August	6 027.2	1 907.0	7 934.2	831.5	9.5	62.8		

Unemployment rate

The seasonally adjusted estimate of the unemployment rate remained steady at 9.5 per cent in August 1994. For males, the unemployment rate rose by 0.1 percentage points to 9.6 per cent, while for females, the unemployment rate fell by 0.1 percentage points to 9.3 per cent.

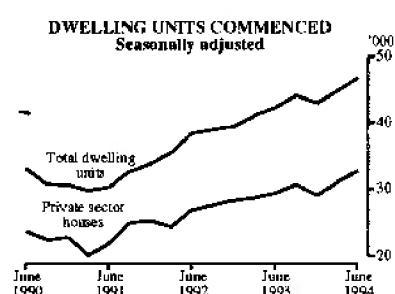
Participation rate

The August 1994 seasonally adjusted estimate of the labour force participation rate fell by 0.4 percentage points to 62.8 per cent. The participation rate for males fell by 0.1 percentage points to 73.5 per cent, while for females, the rate fell by 0.6 percentage points and now stands at 52.4 per cent.

For further information, order the publication Labour Force, Australia, Preliminary (6202.0), or contact Sylvia Sajler on (06) 252 6525.

Starting from the forthcoming August 1994 issue of the publication *Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0), industry data on employed and unemployed persons will be classified according to the Australia and New Zealand Industrial Classification (ANZSIC). More information about the change can be found in the *Information Paper: Labour Force Survey: Introduction of ANZSIC for industry data* (6259.0).

Dwelling unit commencements reach record levels



The preliminary estimate of the number of dwelling units commenced in the June quarter 1994 was 46,698 in seasonally adjusted terms. This was 4.3 per cent above the March quarter 1994 estimate and 10.5 per cent above the June quarter 1993 estimate.

The June quarter 1994 estimate was the highest number of dwelling commencements ever recorded in a quarter. The previous highest quarterly estimate was 45,457 in the June quarter 1973. Private sector house commencements, which rose by 5.2 per cent to 32,673 in the quarter, also created a new record.

Total commencements for the June quarter rose in New South Wales (29.3%), South Australia (10.6%) and Western Australia (4.9%). These rises more than offset falls in Victoria (6.1%), Queensland (4.2%), Tasmania (15.6%) and the Australian Capital Territory (34.7%). Total commencements in the June quarter 1994 were higher than the corresponding 1993 estimates in all States except South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory.

In original terms, there were 47,098 dwelling units commenced in the June quarter 1994, an increase of 15.3 per cent over the March quarter 1994 estimate of 40,864. Total private sector commencements rose by 15.0 per cent (house commencements up by 16.5%; other residential building commencements up 11.3%). Total public sector commencements rose by 21.0 per cent (house commencements up 6.4%; other residential building commencements up 32.5%).

The year at a glance

In original terms, there were 178,320 dwelling units commenced in 1993-94, an increase of 10.3 per cent over the 1992-93 estimate and the highest recorded annual estimate for dwelling units commenced. The 1993-94 estimate is 1.9 per cent above the previous annual peak of 174,963 for this series in 1988-89.

There were 170,186 private sector dwelling units commenced in 1993-94, an increase of 12.6 per cent, while the 8,134 public sector dwelling unit commencements represented a decrease of 22.6 per cent.

Shift to higher densities gathers pace

Total house commencements rose by 7.9 per cent to 126,492 and total other residential building (townhouses, flats, apartments, etc.) commencements rose by 16.7 per cent to 51,828. The increasing importance of the construction of other residential dwellings can be seen from the proportion of other residential dwelling unit commencements as a percentage of total dwelling units commenced. This proportion has increased from 25.8 per cent in 1991-92, to 27.5 per cent in 1992-93 and 29.1 per cent in 1993-94.

Queensland does it again

In 1993-94, Queensland at 52,678, recorded the highest number of dwelling unit commencements of any State, for the second consecutive year. There have only been these two occasions since the series began that either New South Wales or Victoria has not recorded the most dwelling unit commencements in a financial year.

On a State-by-State basis, percentage movements between 1992-93 and 1993-94 in the number of dwelling units commenced are shown in the table below.

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
Houses	6.6	8.6	6.3	1.6	21.3	5.5	41.9	-27.3	7.9
Other residential	9.2	47.9	26.7	-14.3	16.4	-0.2	17.2	19.5	16.7
<i>Total dwellings</i>	<i>7.6</i>	<i>12.0</i>	<i>12.1</i>	<i>-1.5</i>	<i>19.9</i>	<i>3.9</i>	<i>34.3</i>	<i>-6.2</i>	<i>10.3</i>

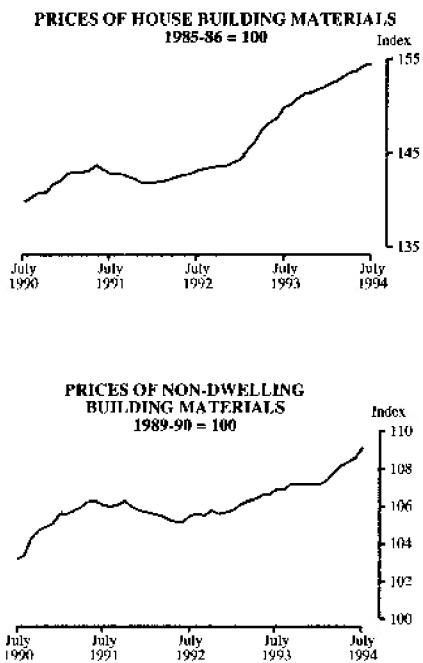
For further information, order the publication Building Activity, Australia: Dwelling Unit Commencements, Preliminary (8750.0), or contact Paul Seville on (06) 252 6067.

Population in brief ...

The estimated resident population of Australia at 31 March 1994 was 17,803,300, an increase of 57,500 in the March quarter and 174,900 since March 1993. The national growth rate during the twelve months to March 1994 was 1.0 per cent, the lowest since the growth rate for the twelve months to March 1976 which also recorded a 1.0 per cent growth rate.

Prices of non-housing building materials on the rise

From June 1994 to July 1994, prices of materials used in the construction of houses increased by 0.1 per cent while prices of materials used in other building increased by 0.5 per cent.



From July 1993 to July 1994, prices of materials used in house building increased by 3.1 per cent while prices of materials used in other forms of building increased by 2.1 per cent, the highest annual increase since August 1991. Almost all of the annual increase in the other than house building materials index occurred in the six months to July.

The small monthly increase for house building materials was a result of falls for timber prices in Adelaide (down 3.5%) and Sydney (down 1.0%), largely offsetting price increases for ready mixed concrete and copper products. Ready mixed concrete prices increased in Perth (by 2.1%), Sydney (1.1%) and Brisbane (0.4%).

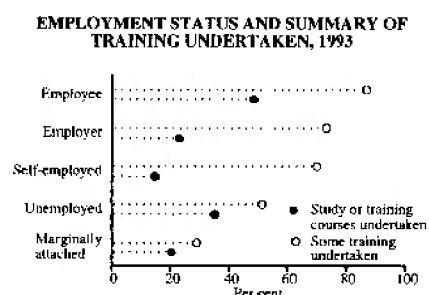
Major contributors to the overall increases in materials for other types of building this month were higher prices for structural steel (1.1%) and ready mixed concrete (0.6%). Sydney had the highest movements for structural steel (up 2.5%) and ready mixed concrete (up 1.3%). Higher world copper prices resulted in increased prices for copper pipes (3.5%), mains cable (2.7%) and circuitry (2.2%).

PRICES OF BUILDING MATERIALS, JULY 1994
Percentage change

City	House building		Other than house building	
	From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year	From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year
Sydney	0.1	2.7	0.6	2.2
Melbourne	-	0.2	0.2	1.9
Brisbane	0.3	2.1	0.4	1.3
Adelaide	-0.6	4.0	0.4	2.1
Perth	0.3	2.4	0.3	2.0
Hobart	0.0	2.8	0.3	0.7
<i>Weighted average of six State capitals</i>	0.1	3.1	0.5	2.1
Canberra	0.0	2.1	0.2	1.2

For further information, order the publications Price Index of Materials Used in House Building, Six State Capital Cities and Canberra (6408.0) and Price Index of Materials Used in Building Other Than House Building, Six State Capital Cities and Canberra (6407.0), or contact Robert Adams (06) 252 6198.

Employee training numbers rise from a high base



More employees reported receiving training in Australia in 1993 than in 1989, according to the recently published results of the 1993 Survey of Training and Education.

In the twelve months prior to the survey, conducted in April and May 1993, an estimated 86 per cent of those who had a wage or salary job in the last twelve months undertook some form of training, compared with 79 per cent during a comparable 1989 period.

The largest component of this increase related to on-the-job training, which rose from 72 per cent to 82 per cent. The percentage receiving more formal training (i.e. undertaking study or training courses) is unchanged from 1989 (47%). However, there was a small shift from in-house training courses (4% decrease) to external training courses and study for an educational qualification (2% increase for each).

Almost half of both male and female wage or salary earners (46% and 48% respectively) stated that they had undertaken study or training courses. Unlike the 1989 survey, there were greater percentages of females in all categories of training than males, except for employer supported external training.

**TRAINING UNDERTAKEN BY WAGE OR SALARY EARNERS
(Per cent)**

	1989			1993		
	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons
Some training undertaken	78.8	79.4	79.0	85.4	86.2	85.8
Study or training courses undertaken	48.5	47.0	47.8	46.1	48.0	47.0
Studied in the previous calendar year	17.0	16.5	16.8	18.3	19.0	18.6
In-house	35.1	34.6	34.9	30.5	32.2	31.3
External, employer supported	7.4	5.2	6.4	8.0	6.4	7.3
External, total	10.4	9.1	9.8	11.7	12.0	11.8
On-the-job training	71.1	72.7	71.8	81.3	82.4	81.8
No training undertaken	21.2	20.6	21.0	14.6	13.8	14.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The publication provides extensive information on:

- Who received training?
- What training was undertaken?
- What support was received for training?
- What training was required to obtain jobs?
- How was training provided?

The survey also covered those who were employers, self-employed, unemployed or marginally attached to the labour force at the time of the survey. In contrast to employees, only 23 per cent of employers and 15 per cent of the self-employed had undertaken study or training courses in the twelve months before the 1993 survey. Almost twice as many people who were unemployed (36%) undertook study or training courses than did those who were marginally attached (21%) ('marginally attached' means those people who were not actively looking for work but who would like to work).

A complete set of the tables in the publication, for each State, is also available on request.

For further information, order the publication Training and Education Experience, Australia (6278.0), or contact Bob McCombe on (06) 252 6660.

Inquiries

The ABS supplies a wide range of statistical information:

- through its bookshops
- by mail order (including subscription)
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Order from the following:

Expected releases over fortnight to 27 September

- [15]** Australian National Accounts: State Accounts, June Quarter 1994 (5242.0; \$26.00)
- [16]** Price Indexes of Articles Produced by Manufacturing Industry, Australia, July 1994 (6412.0; \$11.00)
- [19]** Housing Finance for Owner Occupation, Australia, July 1994 (5609.0; \$11.00)
Export Price Index, Australia, July 1994 (6405.0; \$8.50)
- [21]** Registrations of New Motor Vehicles, Australia, August 1994, Preliminary (9301.0; \$12.00)
- [22]** Price Indexes of Materials Used in Manufacturing Industries, Australia, July 1994 (6411.0; \$11.00)
Import Price Index, Australia, July 1994 (6414.0; \$8.50)
- [26]** Manufacturing Production, Australia, August 1994, Preliminary (8301.0; \$11.00)

Selected releases: 7 to 13 September

General

- Economic Indicators, Vic., August 1994 (1307.2; \$6.50)
Tasmanian Statistical Indicators, September 1994 (1303.6; \$10.00)

Demography

- Australian Demographic Statistics, March Qtr 1994 (3101.0; \$17.00)
Estimated Resident Population by Age and Sex in Statistical Local Areas, NSW — Data on Floppy Disk, 30 June 1993 (3211.1; \$100.00)
Estimated Resident Population by Age and Sex in Statistical Local Areas, WA, 1992 (3203.5; \$25.00)

National accounts, Finance and Foreign trade

- International Trade in Services, Aust., 1992-93 (5354.0; \$20.50)

Labour statistics and prices

- Labour Mobility, Aust., February 1994 (6209.0; \$13.00)
Labour Force Survey: Introduction of ANZSIC for industry data., 1994 (6259.0; \$10.00) — new issue
The Labour Force, Aust. — Preliminary Data on Floppy Disk, August 1994 (6271.0; \$66.30)
Award Rates of Pay Indexes, Aust., July 1994 (6312.0; \$13.00)
Industrial Disputes, Aust., June 1994 (6321.0; \$11.00)
House Price Indexes: Eight Capital Cities, June Qtr 1994 (6416.0; \$27.50)

Agriculture

- Livestock Products, Aust., July 1994 (7215.0; \$8.00)

Manufacturing, Mining, Energy, Service industries, Building and construction

- Sales of Australian Wine and Brandy by Winemakers, July 1994 (8504.0; \$11.00)

- Dwelling Unit Commencements Reported by Approving Authorities, NSW, May 1994 (8741.1; \$11.00)

- Building Approvals, Qld, July 1994 (8731.3; \$11.00)

- Dwelling Unit Commencements Reported by Approving Authorities, Qld, April to May 1994 (8741.3; \$11.00)

- Tourist Accommodation, SA, June Qtr 1994 (8635.4; \$25.00)

- Interstate and Overseas Visitors, NT, September 1993 (8633.7; \$10.00) — new issue

Transport

- Motor Vehicle Regi

The latest — consolidated to 13 September 1994

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Key national indicators	Period	Units	Latest figure available		Percentage change (a) on	
			Original	Seasonally adjusted	Previous period	Corresponding period last year
National accounts						
Gross domestic product (GDP(A)) at 1989-90 prices	June qtr 94	\$m	99 058	100 666	0.9	4.3
International accounts						
Balance on current account (b)	July 94	\$m	- 1 926	- 1 841	- 21	- 62
Balance on merchandise trade (b)	"	"	- 470	- 476	—	—
Balance on goods and services (b)	"	"	- 724	- 565	—	—
Merchandise exports	"	"	5 388	5 217	- 3	- 2
Merchandise imports	"	"	- 5 858	- 5 693	3	9
Net foreign debt	June qtr 94	\$m	161 524	n.a.	- 1.9	- 4.3
Net foreign liabilities	"	"	232 698	n.a.	- 0.2	5.2
Consumption and investment						
Retail turnover at current prices	June 94	\$m	8 392	8 616	- 0.1	5.7
New capital expenditure at current prices	June qtr 94	"	7 284	6 994	- 7	11.0
New motor vehicle registrations	July 94	no.	51 928	52 028	- 0.2	18.2
Production						
Manufacturers' sales at 1989-90 prices	March qtr 94	\$m	35 184	37 572	2.3	9.9
Dwelling unit approvals	July 94	no.	15 312	15 338	- 5.1	1.5
Building approvals	"	\$m	2 151.8	2 298.7	- 17.2	9.2
Building work done at 1989-90 prices	March qtr 94	"	5 783	6 236	- 2.4	—
Prices						
Consumer price index	June qtr 94	1989-90 = 100.0	111.2	n.a.	0.7	1.7
Articles produced by manufacturing industry	June 94	1988-89 = 100.0	116.1	n.a.	0.3	0.7
Materials used in manufacturing industries	June 94	1984-85 = 100.0	124.0	n.a.	0.6	- 2.5
Labour force and demography						
Employed persons	August 94	'000	7 885.7	7 934.2	- 0.5	3.5
Participation rate †	"	%	62.2	62.8	- 0.4	0.3
Unemployment rate †	"	"	9.2	9.5	0.0	- 1.6
Job vacancies	May qtr 94	'000 hours	49.4	53.0	18.5	64.1
Average weekly overtime per employee	"	hours	1.31	1.33	7.5	11.1
Estimated resident population	March qtr 94	million	17.8	n.a.	0.3	1.0
Short-term overseas visitor arrivals	April 94	'000	255	271	- 10.6	12.1
Incomes						
Company profits before income tax	June qtr 94	\$m	5 410	6 115	- 2.5	33.9
Av. weekly earnings, full-time adults; ordinary time	May 94	\$	617.50	618.20	- 1.4	3.3
Financial markets						
Interest rates (c) (monthly average)						
90-day bank bills †	July 94	% per annum	5.40	n.a.	- 0.05	0.45
10-year Treasury bonds †	July 94	"	9.55	n.a.	- 0.1	2.6
Exchange rate — \$US (c)	July 94	per \$A	0.7349	n.a.	0.2	£

(a) Based on seasonally adjusted figures where available. (b) For percentage changes, a minus sign indicates an increase in the deficit; no sign means a decrease in the deficit or an increase in the surplus. (c) Source: Reserve Bank of Australia.

NOTES: † = change is shown in terms of percentage points. n.a. = not available.

Percentage change from same period previous year

Key State indicators	Period	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
New capital expenditure*	March qtr 94	- 4.3	-	8.6	30.1	- 14.6	- 16.2	- 41.0	n.a.	0.2
Retail turnover (trend estimate)	June 94	7.1	-	5.1	6.7	3.8	5.9	4.7	n.a.	5.8
New motor vehicle registrations†	July 94	21.2	11.0	31.7	11.1	11.3	19.7	9.7	- 12.0	18.2
Number of dwelling unit approvals*	July 94	0.3	7.7	- 1.2	- 14.7	6.2	- 5.4	- 51.7	- 24.6	1.5
Value of total building work done	March qtr 94	- 8.2	5.6	4.6	0.7	20.6	4.6	20.3	- 4.7	1.4
Employed persons*	August 94	3.5	2.5	5.9	1.9	4.2	1.0	2.2	2.0	3.5
Capital city consumer price index	June qtr 94	1.5	1.7	1.6	1.9	2.2	2.7	2.2	1.5	1.7
Av. weekly earnings (full-time adult ordinary time)	May 94	3.9	3.6	2.6	1.8	3.0	3.2	1.2	2.6	3.5
Population	March qtr 93	0.8	0.2	2.6	0.5	1.4	0.2	0.9	0.6	1.0
Room nights in licensed hotels and motels, etc.	March qtr 94	7.3	5.4	6.3	5.4	9.5	3.9	16.6	1.5	6.7

* Seasonally adjusted except for NT and ACT. † Seasonally adjusted.

Figures have been taken from a variety of ABS publications. Copies may be obtained from Information Services (see page 7). Some of the figures shown are preliminary, some final, and some are revisions of previously published figures. Users should check the latest relevant publication or with the ABS Information Services if the status of the statistic is important. The ABS should be acknowledged as the source when reproducing or quoting any part of this publication.

